THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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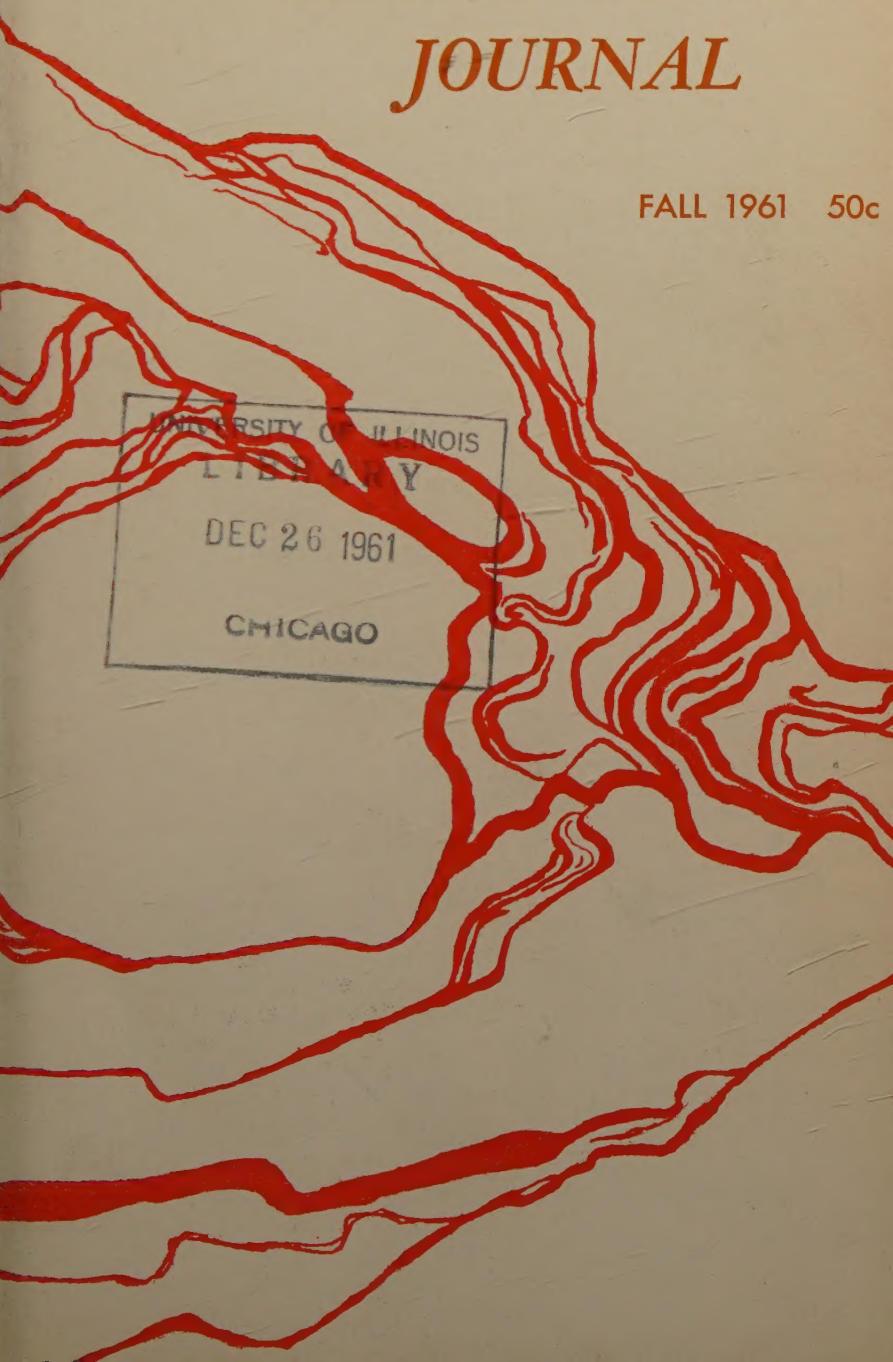

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OF THE DIFFICULTY OF MAP-READING

Heraclitus: the best soul is the driest soul,
But the soul delights to get wet. Very well, my sinner:
I think a map of *your* soul would be black with spots
Denoting bog-holes, where ooze bubbles and sucks;
And arsenical green with spots denoting sloughs
Where algae sicken, and rotting lily pads stink;
And sulphurous yellow with spots that stand for stretches
Where damp fungi flourish, mostly the species
That, beaten by rain, deliquesce most soddenly,
Or breathe the worst malodor when the foot stirs them,
Or attract most insects, and those most ugly and slimy.

Curse you. But I wonder: if all those dampest
Pictures are symbols, to signify your damnation,
Are the further pictures that the inner eye discovers
Symbols as well, to complicate all decision?
Note well: where the lips of bog-holes are blackest dirty,
The blooms of the jewel-weed may glow their deepest;
Recall: where the trash of sloughs is the saddest dull,
The brood of the shy grebe may dip most daintily;
Let the eye remember: what surprisingly delicate
Hues of pastel shimmer from many different
Mushrooms, even if they grow where woods are darkest.

W. R. Moses

TWO POEMS

The First Sorrow of Joseph

Before her body grew heavy, it grew light.
She moved with a new grace; her ears still rang
with the clamor of her terrible messenger's song;
and when she closed herself for sleep at night
his splendor echoed in her shuttered eyes.

This Joseph knew, who saw her day by day
draw from him as a stone drops down a well,
then saw himself, gesticulating, small,
reflected in the mirrors of her eyes
as in well-water when the ripples die.

And Joseph knew she stood in a bright room
with but one other, and a door between.
How could he understand? He held his peace,
and peace grew still in Mary's quickened womb;
its light moved softly in her alien eyes.

Tim Reynolds

Carmel Beach: little sestina

Crabs spring wild on an endless beach,
clitter and scoot down toasted sand.
Waves come tumbling out of the sea.
The air is split by shrieks of gulls
that whip and stammer across the sky.

Children careen on the blinding sand,
slap and spatter the placid sea,

whistle warm verities into the sky.
Children raise castles upon the beach.

Like drying fish upon the sand
their elders sleep. The hissing sea
reflects a darkening of sky,

which darkness spills across the sea.
Litter and garbage crawl over the sand.

Nothing is now but the sound of the sea.

Tim Reynolds

EVE

Ah, if we were immortal
(Eve grieved beneath the laurel
by Eden's fiery portal)
then we could be moral.

How could I stop your whispering?
(she asked the snake) The evening fell;
I watched the apple withering,
its glossy coat grew dull.

I did not reach to steal (said she)
—my waiting hands I cupped,
standing a while beneath the tree,
until the apple dropped.

I knew that we were mortal,
(Eve grieved beneath the laurel
by Eden's fiery portal)
so how can we be moral?

Anne Bradley

STAYING JUST THERE

Have you seen — have you not seen,
In sun-still spring or autumn air,
As you perhaps went wandering down
Some leaf-shuttered country lane,
A single smallish fly, one that was
Neither fruit fly nor bluebottle
But of a size somewhere in between,
Hover in the mild air, balancing on
Frail, diaphanous, glistening wings —
Keeping in that one place as if
Its whole occupation was to stay
Just there, then suddenly rocketing
Forward, upward, and to the rear
In a vertiginous circular swing,
But coming always back and back
To the same point where it had been
Balancing earlier — not, again,
For any more noticeable reason than
The sheer pleasure of floating in that
Stillness of space, or if a less
Innocent logic would best explain
Such an impressive piece of airy
Virtuosity, just for the sake
Of not looking elsewhere in that time
Its urges told it to meditate there —
As you yourself, bright fool, might well
Be doing, in your own singular way,
Were you the natural balancer that some
Others about you seem to be
In their alternate soaring and hovering,
Light and free as the fly's maneuvering:
Have you seen — have you not seen?

John Moffitt

THREE POEMS

The Welcoming

I make a company of elms, jays.
The linden joins me with lopsided branches in Weequahic Park. For you
it is summer; the highway jumps with visitors and trucks;
asphalt decides the country, but it is not so famous

that somehow a boy wriggles out of the hero
The sunfall on a troop of ducks, the stale afternoon.
July simplifies the field. And, like a friend,
my eyes, simple as despair, shall meet you here.

David Shapiro

Lament

Northward the frictionless gulls.
The wives of heroes of a country war,
rinsed to a jetty in the sun's gun over Deal,
waves to the weed in a seaward traffic.

Jobless the witch of the heart
comes their love's diminishing. On the rigid shore

the women grieve their sex, and slogans of despair
make mindless music like the sea's for all its jabbering.

David Shapiro

All The Ferocious Green

All the ferocious green the charred blossoms
of the dogwood rattle with natural sparrow,
every living smiles since the funeral.
And the flies jerk in the sunlight.

The size of a squirrel even, in a sycamore,
flourishes. And the puzzled boys take a trip from home,
drive away quickly to the public beaches.
And just a moment more to be witless and strong.

David Shapiro

TWO POEMS

Of the Golden Bough

King Hugo that was ruler over Cyprus
Sent his capable messenger, go he said,
To that sophisticated man, Signor Boccaccio
(It was Venus who had put it in his head

Once at the sea shore) and say to him
It is our pleasure that he make for us

A cyclopedia of those long since pagan
Gods. And thereupon Giovanni was

Prompt, rising Florentine diplomat,
Who for twenty-five years from that day,
Longer than Hugo lived, copied his long
Manuscript for moderns, telling of Pasiphäe,

Leda, and Helen: the Olympian family
Trees. But Caron, before the leaves were all told,
Sped King Hugo over the black river,
Singing the chantey that he sang of old.

Cornelia Veenendaal

La Mode, Disait Mon Cousin

"One perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception." —Charles Olson

"La mode," said my cousin,
"Begins on another street in Paris."
I caught in the conversation that
Ensued occasional reference
to "pompiers," the bright red
And hooting fire brigade.

Would they permit, the new poets,
One perception following on the heels
Of another? If that may be,
I have before me eleven—clomping
In wooden shoes, one into the shadow
Of the other; and towery lace caps,
And plain black dresses.

Some of them are smiling.

The leader adjusts her cap.
And beside the third lopes
A little white dog with one black ear.
Toward the end of the procession
Three stride together,
Then a little space,
And the last syllable.

Are they coming from mass,
These women of Finestère?
Off to a festival? to work?
Hardly could the Apostles have strode
Along a coast of Palestine with more
Completeness of being.

Behind them, a wash of intense ultramarine
Cuts sharp as a paper knife
A plumy bank of white cloud.
And the ground their sabots hurry on
Is O the stone of France.

Cornelia Veenendaal

LE GHETTO VARSOVIEN

About suffering they were seldom wrong
The New Masters: how well they understood
Its inhuman varieties, how it must take place
As if it were a job like any other,
How, when the aged are dully, impassionately
waiting
For the miraculous dying, there must always be

Children who do not specially know what's happening, skirting
Fearfully, shyly, the edge of the crowd.
They never forgot
That to be really dreadful and not martyrdom death must run its course
In bunches in white-tiled tidy rooms
Where dogs are not allowed, where afterwards the torturer's hearse
Trucks off all that says that once they were.
In the Warsaw *Ghetto,* for instance, how none can turn away
From the disaster because it's everywhere; the woman may
Have seen her father, husband, lover slain, might even have listened
To someone, once, talk life and love and art, the splendid things.
But now for her nothing matters. The sun shines
Equally, as it must, on the hopelessly haunted faces and the clean arrogant
Faces, while an expensive, clever submachinegun promises
To whisper Guerdon to them all. And the dark-eyed lovely girl
Too frightened to cry, having seen so many amazing things that day,
Has someplace to go and so stumbles on.

Marcus Smith

ECLIPSE

That morning we gathered
in a high mown field at the edge of town,
bringing smoked glasses or film negatives,
a few with binoculars, one man with a telescope.

When the wind died down
we waited in silence, eyes on the cloudless sky,
until we saw the night-black disc
encroaching upon the sun,
a shutter slowly closing, diminishing our day.

In that strange twilight as the darkness grew
there was no dew, no motion,
not even a wing. All color drained away,
cows seemed engraved in the dim far pasture,
a horse by the fence was a granite statue,
the people figures in a photograph.

Remembering curse and omen,
old mythologies or modern prophecies,
we watched our own earth's shadow.
For the span of an indrawn breath there was no time
as the blank clock-face circled with living flame
stared from the white corona—
but at last the shutter opened,
releasing gradually golden waves of light.

Then the sunlit field was a carnival sight,
a brisk breeze blew, limp leaves lifted,
grasshoppers leaped, crickets sang,
daisies danced on their stems,
the women's dresses were harlequin bright,
green banners fluttered from every tree,
and we talked and laughed together excitedly.

Mildred Cousens

OF THE RUNNING BY OF GIRLS

when these girls came running by
laughing and giggling and running by,
over something eternal unto themselves,
a practical joke on a friend of theirs,
a story with a funny ending,
they looked like what they were supposed to look like:
young girls full of moists and shapes,
their eyes and mouths a beginning;
the roundness of which the old man saw at once
when he stopped at once
to put his shopping bag down
valuable as it was
to watch the running by.

he smiled as he looked
and said as they passed him,
"come on, catch her"
with more than some concern
that brought him out of some concern
always with him, never left him, except for this;
that brought him back a million years, at least fifty,
his whole world the length of the block.
who would have thought so huge a bridge
was built and crossed
in this so short a time
of the running by of girls.

Samuel L. Albert

THREE POEMS

Summer Incident

Seagulls carried beakfuls of summer blue;
little fish died of heart-ache and sank
while midday's heat fell on feverish pebbles.
And only at mid-afternoon, unkempt children
found the man lying amid their sandcastles.
They waited for him to wake and to speak
when he opened his eyes; and while waiting,
they looked wonderingly at the cresset on his chest.

But he was awake;
two frightened eyes stared from his brave head,
ten fingers moved, ten toes quivered and he rose.
Children asked where he had come from,
what made his hair look so strange,
why his feet appeared so friendly with the sand
and how the sun had turned pink his nails.
But his lips never moved.

Before the evening all came to see him.
He sat on a flat rock and their shadows
flocked closer with lipfuls of questions.
Who are you? Whose breasts did you suck
and whose lullabies sent you to sleep?
And how did you come?
He rubbed off the dry salt from his eyelids
and looked beyond those who watched him.

As it grew darker they became impatient.
Who was this mystery man?
Why did he never speak? Why the colour
of the cresset was white instead of red?

So, they whipped him and repeated their questions;
they whipped him while children looked and
laughed,
while his brave head shook, his fearful eyes stared.
And his lips never told.

Taner Baybars

Burning A Cradle

This cradle, made of cane and now worm ridden,
once barred my midnight cries.
As I see it I have no affection, nothing
that will make me keep it, treasure it,
show it to my children with an ageing purse of lips.
For long I have waited for the inspiration
to take it out into the yard
and burn up those early years, recorded
indelibly in its hidden grooves.

It's a fine day, today, the sun is exploding
on the yellow, unkempt grass. The cradle
shall burn today. The house is empty;
no one around to raise a protest.

Rather harshly I grip it, take it out into the yard;
I choose a kind of altar of grass,
put it down and feel for matches. It is a dry day.
I do not think of the cradle.
I strike a match automatically, still hearing
that baby-talk, those words that no poet
will ever use. The grass catches fire first;
flames leap like Cretan bulls, the cradle

shakes for the first time and settles.

I ask it: Tell me, cradle, how's a hot lulluby?
In answer a cane join snaps, I see
many others stretch and straighten themselves
before, eventually, they fall as ash.
My little ideogram of fear and bad dreams
is beginning to die, this cradle.

But not so. More life remains in the bodywork.
Yet after a little while
it stretches too and sparks and burns.
Now it's not going to see my death, this thing
that shaded me in the sun and kept me away
from creepies, high on an old chest.

I tell it: You'll not see me die, though
you saw me come in. There's nothing
to answer me because the cradle
has turned to ash
and I remain absently staring.

Taner Baybars

Twenty-Third Summer

I pour another glass of wine and cautiously undo
my neck-button and sigh; it seems
ages have passed since we sat here
to listen to each other's cooing syllables.

I ask her: am I older now, do I
approach my end more swiftly?
Some mad music interrupts and I feel
I have not said what I did not want to hear.

Now we are barefooted, the drinks come,
we sweat hastily and drown

on our skins the harbinger of desire.
Am I older, do I look different,

I want to ask, while the new year
flirts with the old and the hour of my birth
closes in on me and I wonder
why such sophistication on a sad day.

Happy birthday, my love, you look younger;
but in parentheses I correct what she says.
Bare feet listen to the music more than ears.
Our tongues sip the wine and all buttons

come undone like these years. The mad tunes
dust our lips, the pantomime begins again.
But I am old, love, I must be old:
a birthday means another sluice in one's life.

Yet we feel, because of our nearness,
we shall be the same to each other
even if many birthdays come between
and every one singes its own signature.

Tonight we celebrate and are in no hurry
to choose the shape and the time of a death.

Taner Baybars

CONSUMMATION

So on a harsh day
under a sullen sky
(no matter what they say)
remarkable you will lie

on a long lonely beach
with kelp among the ledges,
and hungry rollers reach
white tongues to the sweet edges

of deathless you enshrined
in wonderful self-esteem:
but wind and sand will find
you simpler than you dream.

The crab will leave the tide
to live in your success,
and shrieking gulls divide
your unusualness.

You will lie there drying
slowly in salt and sun
and time of sea-birds crying—
and when the weather's done

with what the crab unwraps,
and nothing's left to use,
some storm will take the scraps
even the gulls refuse.

R. E. Sebenthall

POEM FOR MY FATHER'S BIRTHDAY

When I was so small
You could hurl me to heaven
And catch me when the angels missed,
You stood tall as a ship
That could sail to China
And blow home before supper.
When you were so big
You could hold back the sunset
Or spin the moon on the back of your hand,
I was so small
I could run in your shadow
And never reach the end of it.

One night when Long John Silver
Swore and threw his crutch
Of lightning across the sky
And the thunder of his guns assaulted us
Until our windowpanes shook with fright
And the maddened horse of a wind
Almost ran us down as it tried to escape,
You put your man's hand
On the back of my neck
And found words to ease me
So that when the rain-bullets came,
I could enjoy my trembling.

Nils T. Peterson

THE BOY WHO WANTED TO BECOME BUNNY BERIGAN

"Narcissus" without a pool
Admires himself at --
A serious art

The cold trombone

An instrument for lip-reading;

Idee fixe
For the larynx,

Glass in an exhibit of
Gyrating images;
On a rotating dais, with floodlights—
Play to the Oslo *storthing;*
Then swing a wild arc
Through the Low Countries;
Astound Italian condottieri;

Secularize the Escorial
With enormous talent at the blues,
Get borne into Seville
Like a famed *matador.*

Thus went Orpheus
On a summer jazz tour
Through the underworld. . .

What carries in that floating world
(The Windy City heard)?
There was a medieval twang
And clash of parliaments over primitive affairs;
Horses whinnied in the dark.

An observer said, "That is the language of inverted minds,"

"A fantasy play, a fiction powerhouse!"

"My verdict? Cross between virtuoso and plain disc jockey. He played Berigan *primus* all through the night."

"And his bust of Berigan was creamy . . ."

Neighbors kept dashing bric-a-brac against the walls.

The Berigan blues
Bleat and wax
Against the windows, five flights up
Where Charon, leaning on an oar
Listens wilfully (winter night)
For a singular depth in all that wail
And wilderness,
Wondering what he might recall
And carry from that polar sea
To Pluto's realm and classic shore.

Valdemar Olaguer

THE LAST OF THE *LADY BE GOOD*

Nine
laughters:
"Lady, O Lady be good!"
Nine chancers, alien to Libia, could
keep time in tune, check watches, set
course as romantic as a Lady wanted, or would.
Nine virile virtuosos. Why would
any one of them take a good-time baton
except to lead off before going on?

Wave niched green in sand as old blue
sea of battles saw this crew
amid the brave alive and the braver-than-they-knew.
Fresh-washed, captious in khaki,
they were keepsakes of sirens. A crew
of hazard's anonymity, bedizened new
children of exodus — who
among them saw ivory-fingered travesty
tap them? No, they rapped plane's
sinuous serpent length: *"Be*
a better Eden tumbledown. Lady mine,
sweet Puritan plucking at fire-edged pains
of no return, learn: be good.
Come live my love. Come, it's late
and it's great to be good. Good to me."

Naples, was it? But nothing for Naples,
so back toward base, one rough sandblasted
airstrip near Benghasi. They drew
a light-hearted strategy, their tables
full of life, despite dead reckoning
as they dangled stars. No death
spat silence on their swing low of wit,
their belly-full laughter. *"O Lady, sit*
tight till we're home. Home and good

snuggled in." Sweet chariot, she would
flirt with wind the betrayer as stars spit
gold spurs. Such a runaway! For she ran,
sweetest of chariots, her breath
oil-sweet, her song of Solomon
like any hoyden's, good enough anywhere
for souvenir boys, for shard-marvelling man.

Good to groom earth's flanks! She read,
like letters, their memories that led
to vine-cling Aprils. O she'd be
obedient, truly theirs. April, '43.
April always pleasing, teasing mystery,
reminding young gods of earth's
invocations. April—when fragments, shards want
to flee
bitter jewelled silence, and to chant births,
greening, dancing: *"Come back with me!"*
Better fields of the past call to the Lady
as the pilot thinks: do these clouds remember
green strips fronting sand and an ember
burning in perimeter's pharos?
On, on in the fabulous wind
the heart-elected Lady goes.

Mission *not* complete. Crusader hearts
hammer anxiety. Well, world's drained of
need of converting "be good" love,
little Lady. Reason flows
as air, lifting time's contrary rose
to their wooing faces. Reason flows
like tides, on the ancient sea's
brutal edge of truth. Each man knows
such need to return, just return.
On shards and bones, coral of histories,
there are tides, reasons, records, degrees
of known and unknown. Who will learn

a lost Lady's secrets? Cropped skulls own
unaccepting eyes. Alone, alone,
the Lady trembles on. Where now, crusaders?

Already deep in desert. How could they
tell the Lady's caprice? *"Bearing . . . bearing . . ."*
broke radio silence, and a white ray
of hope, Benina, gave the crusaders
a 330 degrees bearing (cast
not on an approach, as they deemed—they were past
all finding, all true directions). Wearing
hope like love's token, the pilot
held course. Fuel gone, starway
become a stumbling, reason a despairing,
at last—they abandoned the Lady. Still hope
demanded
small reprieve of silence: *"—got*
lost returning, out of gas, jumped, landed
in desert at 2:00 in morning, no one
badly hurt, cant find John,"
and added (that newday) a resilient
daysum: *"all others present."*

Leaving goodchance sky, leaving height,
they came, numbers up in their lost-and-found world,
to time's precipice. Light
became heat's monster; sand
dug at eyes—a man's own sight
fouled by his future of dust, each grain
fiery as mustard. Walked. Rested. Hurled
into retribution, each tried to stand
suffering with prayer *"—prayers all the time,*
again p.m. very warm, hell. Can't sleep.
Every one sore from ground."
Gathered last resources. Tried to keep
a mustard-seed patience. Was there in the land
a heaven's Lady? They found

no gentleness, no minstrations "*—very miserable . . .*
continuous blowing of sand . . ."

"*In whose dream am I dead?*" the pilot dreams;
"*In whose sinking in dream is this daysand?*
How long, God, is oblivion?—
this sinking, sleepless? Can I stand
another tomorrow? Hope a sand-burning one
will save our years, see us home? Dreams
make one with immediacy . . . while I hold
my spirit here with my breath.
I dream between dispersions. Day's furnace
is more dread than war. Cold, cold
is the bosom of night. Will a Lady
hear a drift of dreaming? O gracious death!"

As in a dream, no end. Just dark, or shock
of rhythm's return. Breath can rock
gently in thin bodies; it can be
gentle when, all things in season, it must flee
unconscious lips. "*No help yet . . .*" None—
for plateau they trekked was one
entrapped by eternal sand. "*Where are we?*"
—where Time comes from. Their anabasis
could arrive at no blue sea; this sea of sand, this
was theirs (boundlessness that Arabs know
as the Sand Sea of Calanscio).
And behind them, the downed plane (refuge for
none) bore
name and precept: "*Lady, Be Good*"
into years of silence. Then was once more
found to men who, precipice-conscious, would
grin on the sentence of a gone day.

Nine young lovers, gone, all gone.
I suffered their time—and on.
With time to tell, I grasp at much, speechless,
between sleep and waking, dusk and dawn,

between plans of salvage and the looking on
where sandsift yields—what? A more dread foolday
bringing April? Do heart's diamonds recess
into dunes of anonymity? And our fragments, shards
flee
into bitter jewelled silence, purposeless?
What good, and goodnight tag-ends the play?
Behind the Lady I hear a cherubinic wanderer say,
"My end is where no end is. I press
on even beyond God, into a wilderness."
And on world's winged approaches I see
bewilderingly new bright blazonry.

Sam Bradley

MIDNIGHT PIPE

I tamp tobacco in my pipe and flare
a match to it and blue the bedroom air
with smoke that curls in layers to the light.
I find I cannnot smoke without some light.
The taste of tongue must match the taste of sight
for me regardless of the time of night.

My heart thuds blind against its jail of bone.
I feel it while I hold this blackened stone
of briar in my palm — the punctual blood
aflow since God breathed Adam out of mud
and sailed the risk of Noah through the flood.
I time three smoke-rings to the tock of blood

and think of old Mark Twain who puffed a cob
the night he died as if he meant to rob
the thief who waited by his bed of one
persisting relish from the past of men . . .
I rack my pipe and wait and wonder when
I will breathe out and never in again.

Samuel Hazo

DEATH OF A NEIGHBOR

She avoided children.
Hers were already grown,
Disappointing her
In some intangible way.
Flowers were more grateful.
Tending their gratitude
She spent her days alone.

But once when autumn
Blew across our fence,
She leaned to me murmuring,
Almost in self defense,
"Are these bulbs to your taste?
They multiply so fast.
I cannot bear to see such beauty go to waste."

She died that fall.
I was away.
At my garden wall
Her bulbs are blooming still:
Fragrant sprays.
Black heart, white petals,
In the wind, they stir.
Teeming earth,
Rest gently, quietly on her.

Ruth Finer Mintz

STREET SCENE

Past the barefoot *borracho* in siesta
on a sidewalk in Monterrey two ladies
from Texas walk in terror. They are not sisters
but neither are the ladies in their eighties

so every caballero's quick eye springs
to dark attention and his face behind
always mustaches rakes the gringos' swinging
gait, doubtful of the gringos' husbands' minds.

"The girls" from Texas shake with lovely terror—
the worship in a smooth young face seems clear,
but you know latins. Does the caballero
that just passed by adore her purse or her?

But then some looks are hard, and it is shocking!
Now at their sundress nationality
a villain spat at and just missed their stockings
flipping his serape back scornfully.

From every doorway comes the highheel clicking
and thin guitars. The ladies both from Texas
and having slight hangovers think this wicked.
Imagine rhumba music with your breakfast!

Entering the Gran Café—which is not gran—
they find that neither is it a café
but a *cantina.* Eyed by every man
they flee, but feel their femininity.

A glorious hero of the Revolution
now beggared crawls across a street adance
with hooting shooting cars in nonstop motion
on hands and on his grimed and legless pants.

A mother, old, blackbraided, shoeless, rankish
of Mexican poor and *tortas de pavo*

whines Aztec and the girls, who know no Spanish
guess, giving her (they think) twenty centavos.

She crosses forehead, lips, and vari-colored
rag-covered breast in the Mexican fashion.
The ladies please to think it is an ora
for them, some sort of heathen intercession.

Now: a parade is coming down Madero.
Perhaps it's what the Mexicans are for.
They make a ceremony of *la guerra*
but will their Olés! win the atom war?

In strapless cotton and still feeling beat
walking behind them all alone Picara
half shares their fears yet halfway yearns to borrow
the lack of print perfection in the street.

Behind Picara and the girls (not sisters),
Padre de Mier, calle de Madero—
blue in the natural enchanting distance
and white the foggy range of the Sierras.

Betty Miller Davis

THE CRANBERRY BELL

Knowing that most things break she cherished glass.
Each day she made a ritual of goblets
and saw to it that no one but herself
washed and dried the cranberry-colored bell.
Long ago her great-great grandmother
had rolled it in a quilt of down and carried it
unbroken to the west. It was as if
her geneological chart had started with
a seed of glass instead of flesh and she

drew lineage from the cranberry bell.
She placed it in the window by the door
where day was red and night was royal in it,
surrounding it with goblets highly prized—
Rose in Snow, Bessimer Flute, and many
patterns of the grape. She loved to hear the tinkling
of the bell, wondering how an artisan could blow
a glass that would not break on glass—and glass
that sang! If quarrier she were, she'd quarry glass
and mason, if she were, she'd build with it.
She thought about the perils it had passed.
So fragile to survive two hundred years.
So delicately rare! And it was safe
with her as she was safe with glass.

Her husband coming in from the barn at dusk
would hear her speak the names of all the goblets
that she loved: "Diamonds in Diamonds, Palmette,
Westward Ho, Owl and Possum, Wheat."
How did it start, he thought, who was to blame?
The smell of animals still clung to him
like air that steaming cattle had made stale.
Sometimes, faint with it, she tried to tell him,
but it was like their marriage—too taut to share.
She mourned their love in glass instead of black,
and grief grew less as her collection more.

Years ago her parents had been boarders
at his father's farm. Had stayed all summer. How else
could they have met? For Hal had never danced
at any ball nor made a date to meet
in a museum. Where else could they have found
such solitude as in his father's
blueberry field? Hal picked until his palms
were honeycombs of blue which he emptied in her lap
or dropped into the target of her mouth.
"How blue they are!" she cried. Then to herself

"Picasso blue." The sun was rival fire
to their veins burning hot as loving burned
in them. His touch was like a game of bowls
in which his hands threw heat of many suns
into her blood. And so they both forgot
the sun was made to set.
Sometimes at night,
alone in her room, she sensed again the magic
of that field and put her feet upon the floor
and walked to where he slept and watched him
sleeping.

How strange she could not speak to him of it.
A silence out of pride and shyness grew
that neither found the way toward lessening.
Each night at dinner she heard little that he
said to her. Musing on her goblets,
she held the rarest up in fancy to the light,
or told herself their history again.
She loved to live the story of the bell,
describing to herself each ancestor
who once had carried it to safety.

How strange she could not speak of it to Hal,
but he found pleasure more in food than glass.
At breakfast he would say, "More jelly, Meg,
more jelly", spilling it upon his lips
then licking it and grinning like a child.
How strange she could not speak to him of it.
Instead she steeled herself to turn, then blushed.
What was the use to speak? What was the use
for him as well as her to speak? For he
observed the lightly balanced fork, the busy
napkin nervous on her lips, the dainty way
she cut and ate her food. The wonder was
what kept them one, for there was hardly more
than memories between them. Yet memories

were strong enough to haunt them through the years.
She would have said, if she could say such things,
"We are like rivers meant to meet and branch."
And Hal though shy might say. "I'm like a marsh
containing what the earth's about and softer
than I seem."

Who knows how large the silence
would have grown if Hal one day had not gone
hunting.
The sky was showing wounds when he came home
rivalling the pheasants on his back.
Meg heard the hounds and calling down had warned,
"The birds are dripping blood. Now mind you put
them
on the block." But he was thinking of the calf
who had been ailing some at dawn. He turned
into the barn, the pheasants dangling from his back,
the beagles at his heels, and stopped to check
the calf whose fever now was raging, whose
symptoms
puzzled Hal. He went to phone the Vet.
Meg met him at the door. "Don't track the floor
with blood" she said. "The calf" he pleaded "the calf
is sick." She blocked the door and warned again.
"The birds are dripping blood." "Then mop it up"
he snapped in sudden anger, sweeping the pheasants
from his back, but in an arc so wide he swept
the birds against the shelves and brought
Meg's goblets down with them. He knew at once
the danger and reached to save the cranberry bell.
But even as he reached he saw it like a rosy comet
fall and crash with all her goblets to the floor.
Hal saw the look of horror in her eyes. "Meg" he said,
"I'm sorry, mighty sorry." He leaned to her.
She slapped his face. "You fool, you clumsy fool."

"Won't do no good to fight" he said, as if
he had a horse to tame. "You fool" she said
again. "I tried to save it. Meg I tried."
His anger gone, he saw that hers was high
and turned to go but turned too quickly, falling
on the glass and cutting his hand. At first
she did not see the blood, but saw instead
the other red upon the floor. It was
as if her life had shattered with the bell,
as if her ancestors had come to nothing
more than broken bits of glass. Hal heard
a little sound, no more than if she cleared
her throat. "I tried" he said "you must have seen
I tried." Her silence troubled him. He wanted both
to go from it and stay. She heard him phone
the Vet, and then come back to stare at her.
His hand upon the door was dark with blood
though why the sight of blood brought back the past
she did not know. She spoke or thought she spoke.
My life has been between two fields, of blueberries
and glass. Aloud she said, "O, Hal, you're hurt".
He looked down at his hand. "Not as much
as some" he said. She saw the flash of sunset
on his wound and heard the loudest rocking in her
heart,
as if a lost musician had struck his cymbals
there. "Your blood" she said at last, "is red
as the cranberry bell."

Virginia Brady Young

HOMAGE TO E. E. CUMMINGS

If I clicked a tongue
Upon whose tip the tastes of words
So trickly were,
Or had I such an eye
For beauty as danced like skittish birds
On Byzantine boughs,
Or if I pounced on love
With such magician's hands as made
Pale spidery cages out of my fingers,
What rakish, spindly metaphor
Would not shimmer with dew in the glade
Of my green dreams?

If I had a Lady
Upon whose topaz eyes mused the opaque
Vague gossip of the grave,
And had she such a mouth
For love as nurtured in my soul a plague
Of rose- and poppy-fields,
Or if I met her thighs
With such demonic praise as shrank
Astral collision to a pin-fall,
What drunken, bubbling metaphor
Would not come gluttoning down the rank
Of my green dreams?

Robley Conant Wilson

THE MOTEL

Neon notice: Vacancy. There seems
room at the inn for us tonight, my soul.
We shall engage a cubicle for dreams
with stainless linen and a sterile bowl.

Notice: Welcome to Ye Olde Barn Motel.
This, my transient soul, must be the place.
Notice: The towels are counted. This foretells
our inevitable fall from grace.

Notice: Turn down your TV after twelve.
Its nightmares gnaw these walls like venal mice.
Notice: Find extra glasses on the shelf.
Open the dreams, soul; I'll have mine with ice.

Notice: Please use the bath-mat on the floor.
Worlds breed beneath the fiction of our height.
Notice: Upon retiring, lock your door.
Hide you, my soul, against the coming night.

Notice: We're pleased to serve you. Come back soon.
Heaven's a free breakfast we devour.
Notice: Vacate these premises by noon.
No soul may dream beyond the check-out hour.

Richard Curry Esler

THREE POEMS

Free Floating Aggression

A black swallow-tail mixes all the meters—
The crippled iambics of ping pong,
The strafer's peeling off to a feminine ending,
Bushing it trochaic above the camouflage,
And taking the mock-heroic bent of the wind
To anapaestic. It excels in sprung
Rhythm; spondee, the Siamese syllabic
Thrust out of the thorax; and fumbles
Spastic in padded air like a likeable
Mongoloid given run of the house in deference to
Its fastidious use of caesura.

William I. Elliott

Doers of the Word

Theories count at the fingertips.
They break and enter through the ear
As through a back door in daylight;
But they count at the fingertips.

One can feel them sink down the neck,
Bunch in a thicket of shoulder,
And quickening in the bicep
Jingle down meadows of forearm
To fingertip promontories,
And leap like lemmings, free,
Into the catch-all air—they have
Their impact there or not at all:
Turn the teak to statuary,
Trail God's hem through the oil's ferment,

Bind and bow beauty out of the gut,
Or force a gender on words.

These things sometimes happen. Always
The ear is jimmied, left ajar
For theories to enter and risk
Their lives, where it counts, at fingertips.

William I. Elliott

On the Road

Consider
That in 1931 in Switzerland—
A good neutral nation now—a swineherd
Wounded in the wrong places found his wife
Pregnant and fell on the poor girl with whip
And invective; and that the star bloomed blue
Over their cold valley and he was born.

Consider
That—to ignore the commonplace details
Of his youth, on dramatic principles—
This boy waxed blonde and politically
Neutral; that he learned to call a hog
With the best of them, and, bored by this, wound
Down from the mountains to bustling Berne.

Consider
That there he found what Arbeit a bumpkin
Could, shifted from garden to kitchen,
Was even sacked from the Kirche belfry
For donging out the Canon's first proud flex
Of demythologizing. He climbed down
From the belfry and went into the light.

Consider
That he then signed into the querulous crew

Of an ocean-going passenger ship
As a baker's helper, that he kneaded
Dough below while the Honorable Mr
And Mrs Chetwind-DuBois lay above
Reeling in the stupor of the Captain's Night.

Consider
That in Lisbon, the baker having been
Driven to cutting faulty cookies, he
Was discharged, flashed his neutral passport
And universal visa and wandered
Swiss-free through the catch-all human cat walks
Of syphilitic Portugal; and next

Consider
That he fell in with a literate wino
Who at last enabled him to send home
For a Swiss buck (the wino long after
Nursed the memory of the licked stamp)
And that sure enough in three months'
Time the picaro received a pay-off.

Consider
That the rumpled buck was wrapped in a note
(With learning borrowed from a scholar
Of another valley) to the effect that
Mom and Dad were lonesome and Lisbon
Was so far away and besides, son, how
Are you getting along religiously.

Consider
That he is getting along towards thirty
Now. All this of course works a deep strain
On our consideration, but he is
Now at the point where we have lost him.
If we are going to hear from him again
It should be during the next three years.

William I. Elliott

AMNESIA IN BLACK AND WHITE

At mid-night,
driving the highway narrows toward
dark's cold and outer wall,
chilled to the bone and chrysalis-bound,
you can too easily forget:
an earlier season, with its pollen blowing,
pencilled this calligraphy of cold the eye glimpses,
in grass-tufts leached and leaning to the snow,
in strokes of trees lop-sided and naive
as those the anonymous hand dissembled
in primitive paint against too big a hill.

Now yesterday's rain is cold in the juniper,
you could find this landscape moving
past any window where snow lies —
the seed-pods empty, the leaves down —
and not know anything beyond these hieroglyphics
scribbled on a wall of white,
or smears of rock against a whirling mountain.
Moving in a daze of winter
through chiaroscuro of a windy night,
you could forget, even, the rage of spring
and that its mines are planted underground.

Gladys La Flamme

COLLECTED POEMS. *By Robert Graves. Doubleday and Co., $5.95.*

One of the front pages in this volume lists 40 books written by Robert Graves. That's a full lifetime's work for any author. Yet in addition to this, Graves has written a large number of fine poems. They have deep roots in both the classical and Irish traditions. Many of them are love songs in a style now deemed *unfashionable*—whatever that may mean. They are often quietly great poems and Graves' late recognition as a poet (though he has been publishing for 45 years) should make them something of a discovery for many readers.

THE FAMILY BOOK OF VERSE. *Selected and edited by Lewis Gannett. Harper, $4.95.*

It would be difficult to say how many anthologies of verse appear each year. They vary in content from the esoteric to the commonplace. Here is one that presents almost every aspect of poetry: a collection for people who like to read verse aloud and who want in one volume poems that will fit all whims and moods. You'll find great poems here, fair ones, some that are really quite bad. But they all have *something* to recommend them. The thoughtful reader (or listener) will have a fine time discovering what it is.

A NET OF FIREFLIES. *Translated by Harold Stewart. Charles Tuttle, $4.50.*
LAND OF THE REED PLAINS. *Translated by Kenneth Yasuda. Charles Tuttle, $4.50.*

These two unusual books present a good cross-section of some of the finest Japanese verse. The first is devoted to *haiku,* the 17-syllable ephemeral poem that has such deep roots in the Japanese sensitivity to small things. The second book contains 100 *tanka* (31-syllable poems) selected from the Manyoshu, an 8th century anthology of some 4,000 poems from various sources. Considering the immense difficulties involved, the translations are excellent, the notes most helpful. Both books are beautifully illustrated with special paintings reproduced in full color.

KADDISH. *By Allen Ginsberg. City Lights Books, $1.50 (paper).*

It is considered safe now to mock Allen Ginsberg. More's the pity. Granted, he's pretty wild and rather juvenile at times. But he also has much of that very special fire that lights the poetic imagination. He needs discipline, but he can also move the reader to a genuine sense of emotional sharing. You won't like all of it equally, but this is a book worth reading.

LANGUAGE AND POETRY. *By Jorge Guillén. Harvard University, $5.50.*

This is a very special book. It deals with the language and form of Spanish poetry from Gonzalo de Berceo, the first known Spanish poet, to the so-called Generation of '98. It is a superb example of a scholar's movement from the particular to the general. Spanish poets are the immediate subject of Guillén's exploration of the precise nature of his country's poetry, but much that he says will spill over for the perceptive reader to include all important poetry everywhere.

WAGE WAR ON SILENCE. *By Vassar Miller. Wesleyan University, $1.25 (paper).*

Here is a book of splendid poetry, unusual on two counts. It is wholly written within a strict framework of meter and rhyme. It presents a religious fervor and experience we have come to associate more with the older divines than with the 20th century. The poems are difficult but reading them will prove a most rewarding poetic task.

PHAEDRA AND FIGARO. *Translated by Robert Lowell and Jacques Barzun. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, $5.00.*

These two excellent translations may finally bring two of the greatest plays of the French theater into their proper prominence here. Both are known by name to almost everyone. Few have read them mainly because they have been considered "untranslatable." The versions presented here are worthwhile remedies for that complaint.

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